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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Division of Biographic Information

VOSE, Dr. Fritz Wilhelm

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

Dr. (Fritz) Wilhelm Voss was from 1951 to 1953 the leader of an unofficial German Military and Technical Mission in Egypt. Since 1954 he has remained in Cairo as a technical adviser in the Ministry of War, the Ministry of Commerce, and in the Ministry of State for National Production, although it appears presently that his last contract with the Egyptian Government has expired and will not be renewed.

1. Voss' Career prior to 1937:

Dr. Voss was born on July 1, 1896 at Rostock, Germany. After completing his elementary education, Voss volunteered for active duty in the Army. In October 1914 he was released from the Army, having been severely wounded on the Western Front, and having received the Iron Cross Second Class, and the German equivalent of the Purple Heart. He then completed his studies at the College for Trade (Handelshochschule) in Leipzig, specializing in law and economics, and receiving a degree in accounting. Dr. Voss then became an assistant at the economic seminar of Leipzig University, and subsequently returned to Mecklenburg to act as an adviser to the Mecklenburg Chamber of Commerce. Shortly thereafter he became administrative secretary of the Association of German Employers in Berlin and Leipzig and for the main publishing firm of C.F. Peters in Leipzig. At the same time he was an instructor (Dozent) at the Leipzig Handelshochschule. In 1931 he opened a private accounting practice. His practice increased considerably after the establishment of the Nazi regime in 1933, and he was appointed to the board of the Deutsche Revision und Wirtschaft A.G., a large accounting and trustship firm. In 1934 or 1935 he received the I.G. Farbenindustrie account as well as a number of lesser accounts. A good proportion of his work during this period was done at the request of the Nazi Government, which was then reorganizing German industry to meet the needs of a war economy. In 1929 Dr. Voss made a trip to the United States, where he attended a conference at Columbia University. As a practicing accountant, he found it necessary to make many trips abroad, during which time he presumably learned English, the foreign language he gave on all questionnaires. Paragraph sources 1.2.1.4.1.6/

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2. Subsequent Industrial Positions:

Voss was appointed to the board of the Reichswerke A.G. (later Hoffman- und Maschinensbau "Hermann Goering") at the time of the organization of Goering's combine in 1937. His later prominence on the German industrial scene was the direct result of his position on the board of the Goering combine. In 1938, after the annexation of Czechoslovakia, Voss was appointed chairman of the board of the Prague Kredit Bank, a bank which held the majority interest in the Skoda armaments network. Having transferred the Prague Kredit Bank Skoda holdings into the Goering combine, Voss became managing director of Skoda, now known as A.G. WZM (former) Skoda-Werke, Prague. The final annexation of the Skoda Works came about in 1940 when Goering "purchased" the Schneider-Creusot Works in France, the French armaments combine which had formerly been a large shareholder in the Skoda Works. Voss held, *inter alia*, the following industrial positions during World War II:

- (1) President of the Board of Directors and Managing Director of A.G. WZM, Skoda Works, Prague (a subsidiary of Reichswerke "Hermann Goering").
- (2) Chairman of the Board of the Hagen-Walzen-Fabrik A.G., Vienna (a subsidiary of the Reichswerke "Hermann Goering").
- (3) Chairman of the Board of the Prague Kredit Bank (during the war a subsidiary of the Deutsche Bank).
- (4) Director and Chairman of the Management Committee of the Reichswerke "Hermann Goering", Berlin.
- (5) Chairman of the Board of the Siemens-Tele-Funk-Fabrik A.G., Vienna (affiliated with Reichswerke "Hermann Goering").
- (6) Chairman of the Board of the Central-Werkstoffe A.G., Vienna (subsidiary of the Reichswerke "Hermann Goering").
- (7) President of the Board of Directors of Central S.A., Milan (subsidiary of Reichswerke "Hermann Goering").
- (8) Chairman of the Board of Central A.G., Prague (subsidiary of Reichswerke "Hermann Goering").
- (9) President of the Board of Directors, Maschinenfabrik Augsburg A.G., Prostauz (affiliate of Reichswerke "Hermann Goering").
- (10) Chairman of the Board of Kautschuk-Fabrikation A.G., Prague (affiliate of Reichswerke "Hermann Goering").
- (11) Chairman of the Board of Synthetische Gummiwerke A.G., Prague (chemical concern affiliated with Kautschuk-Fabrikation A.G.).
- (12) Chairman of the Board of Fritz Brunner Maschinenfabrikation, Bremen (affiliated of Reichswerke "Hermann Goering").
- (13) Chairman of the Board of Arde AG fuer Flugzeugindustrie, Prague (airplane factory affiliated with Reichswerke "Hermann Goering").

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- (14) Deputy Chairman of the Board of Directors, Rheinmetall-Borsig A.G.
- (15) Director of Industriewerke Rheinmetall A.G., Vienna
- (16) Chairman of the Board of Industriewerke Rheinmetall A.G., Bremen
- (17) Industriewerke Rheinmetall (armaments expert) in the "Four Armaments Industry" (from 1942 to early 1944).

Sources: 7.8.9/

3. Nazi Affiliations:

Nazi Party:

- (1) Voss joined the NSDAP in 1937
- (2) Scheidegger (SS): Voss joined July 14, 1934 as a ~~Untersturmführer~~ (1st lieutenant). He was promoted to ~~Sturmführer~~ (1st lieutenant) on January 30, 1936; to ~~Sturmbannführer~~ (captain) on November 9, 1936; to ~~Sturmabteilungsführer~~ (major) and attached to Himmler's staff on August 12, 1939; to ~~Sturmabteilungsführer~~ (lieutenant colonel) on August 10, 1939; and to ~~Sturmabteilungsführer~~ (colonel) on January 30, 1942.

In February 1945 Voss' request for active duty was approved by Himmler. After a period of recuperation in a Bavarian hospital, Voss became Chief of Staff of an unidentified unit in Czechoslovakia. The unit was subsequently captured by the American forces.

(3) Other Nazi Organizations:

Voss was a member of the ~~Bruderschaft der SS~~ (Himmler's circle of friends) and reportedly donated 1,000,000 Reichsmarks/SS for "special tasks". In addition Voss was a member of the "Lebensborn" Society. Sources: 10.11.12.13.14.15.17/

4. Difficulties in Nazi Germany

On February 17, 1945 Voss was relieved from the chairmanship of the ~~Bruderschaft~~, (and thereby his other positions) by General ~~Seidemann~~. According to Berlin files, his dismissal was about as a result of a dispute between Voss and a ~~Bruderschaft~~ member of the ~~Bruderschaft~~. 16/ Voss then wrote Heinrich Himmler asking for his help at the "right moment". In a statement made to the United States Military Attaché, Cairo, Voss described the incident saying that the general had been between him and Hermann Goering's son, that he had had to use a gun to prevent a court-martial in Goering's headquarters, and that Himmler had protected him after receiving his letter. 17/ Voss' story is

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corroborated by his letter to Hitler, although no mention is made therein about Goering or his son. There is, nonetheless, a report to the effect that the cause of Voss' dismissal was corruption and/or the failure of the Skoda Works to meet their quotas. 18/

5. 1945 - 1951:

Little is known about Voss' postwar career. Apparently interned by the American Military Government as a possible war criminal, he was not tried at Nuremberg, but did serve as a witness in other trials. He spent some six months in Czechoslovak custody, but was released and returned to American custody. The reason for his release was, according to Voss, "because he had never exploited his position at Skoda and because he did not take the advantage he might have as the leading German in Czechoslovakia". 19/ He also said on a different occasion that his wife and two sons were killed by the Russians shortly after the end of the war. 20/ Voss passed through a total of 14 internment camps before his release in 1950. Additional sources: 21, 22, 23/

6. Arrival in Egypt:

* Voss arrived in Egypt in February or March 1951. 24, 25/ Ever since the summer of 1950, King Farouk had wanted to establish a non-British mission in Egypt. Voss was apparently chosen on the recommendation of a German businessman in Cairo named Hassan (no record in 21) who was approached on the subject by an official named Abdul Hamid. Voss arrived with three technicians and proceeded to recruit the military mission which followed, doing so by means of letters to former German military commanders. 26, 27, 28/

7. Voss' Influence in Egypt:

Voss' influence in Egypt has fluctuated with the Egyptian political situation. Originally a man of mystery in Cairo, Voss apparently won greater confidence after the abdication of King Farouk. In July 1953 a neutral source said that "Voss is head and shoulders above all the other experts, and that he dominates the others and has no rival from the point of view of leadership or influence upon the Revolutionary Command Council". 29/ At the same time Voss appears to have been used as an adviser by Naguib, telling Naguib that he should not attempt to become a dictator. 30/ In the summer of 1953 the German Mission reached its peak, amounting to some seventy persons. Voss, unofficially chief of the Mission, was listed as an adviser to the Minister of War. 31/ He was also described in one report as a "fully-authorized representative of the Federal Republic of Germany". 32/

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although the Foreign Office had established a policy of treating the German Mission to Egypt as ordinary German citizens in that country. 10/ By October 1953 Voss seemed to have lost much of his influence in the Egyptian government. He was at that time assigned to the Under Secretary of War as an adviser, 11/, and his staff was reduced to one assistant and four technicians. He was also no longer referred to as Chief of the German Mission, the military and technical parts of the mission having split apart, probably because of a feud between Voss and General Fahrmacher. 11/ In June 1954, after Nasser had replaced Naguib, Voss was transferred to the Ministry of Commerce. 12/ At that time it was rumored that Voss' contract would not be renewed, many of the other contracts having elapsed without renewal. However, Voss' contract was renewed for one year. In February 1956, at the time of the expiration of the one-year contract, Voss was transferred again, this time to the office of the Minister of State for National Production. 13/ As of summer 1956 it appears that Voss' contract has been terminated. Whether he plans to remain in Egypt to start an export-import office, as is mentioned in one report, 14/ or whether he will return to Germany is unclear for the moment. 15/ The reason for Voss' decline in Egypt seems to be based on Nasser's mistrust of him; at one time Nasser is alleged to have said "Voss is a liar and you can quote me." 16/ The latest information, received in October 1956, tends to corroborate the above, and adds that when technicians are needed, Nasser prefers to obtain them from East Germany. 17/

8. Voss Relations with the Federal Republic of Germany:

Voss' relations with the Federal Republic have been clouded with secrecy. Although considered at one time a representative in disguise of the Foreign Office, and alleged to have private connections with State Secretary Hallstein, Voss was never on good terms with Gunther Pöhlke, the German Ambassador to Cairo until 1954. 18, 19/ Voss appears to have won his battle with Pöhlke, however, for Pöhlke was recalled in 1954 and replaced by Walter Becker, a personal friend of Voss. 20/

9. Extraneous Information about Voss:

While in Egypt, Voss has alternately been accused of Nazi and Communist sympathies. Much of the derogatory information about Voss stems from Gunther Pöhlke, the former West German Ambassador to Egypt. 21, 22, 23/ A Belgian Intelligence Report links Voss with Otto Sternberg, Werner Lammann, and Hans Wagner. 24/

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Voss himself has said to the American Military Attaché, Cairo, that Skorzeny in his opinion is a "dangerous man", that he has not seen Wasmann since 1940, and that he knows Wagner only from an American Internment Camp in Nuremberg. 40/ One source of the anti-Voss propaganda was the British Mission in Cairo, who felt that Voss' influence would hinder them in retaining their position in the Suez Canal. 38/ The current rumor about Voss is that he was instrumental in bringing about the Czech arms deal of February 1956, using Czech connections made in World War II. 36/, 41/ It is felt that the amount of derogatory information on Voss stems primarily from his antipathy to Fawcett, and secondarily from the uneasy position of the Western powers in Egypt. The implication that Voss, a prosperous man according to an objective glance at his background, would associate closely with a band of destitute German soldiers of fortune seems hardly credible. In addition it is noteworthy that Voss has been accused of contact with no particular group, but with every prominent Nazi who has been to the Near East in recent years. This indiscriminate association, combined with a complete lack of evidence concerning what Voss did with these Nazis, lends skepticism to the reports. Likewise, Voss' background precludes any Communist sympathy on his part.

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